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ABSTRACT

In response to a growing concern over how adult students' needs can be met effectively, Lansing Community College has produced two videotapes and accompanying materials for use with faculty development programs. These 3/4 inch color videocassettes are designed to be used in a workshop setting as well as on a cable or closed television system for individual or group viewing. The first tape, a 30 minute introduction, discusses--through a series of interviews--how one teaches adults, while the second tape presents a theory of adult learning advanced by Malcolm Knowles. This document contains the following materials that accompany the tapes: an outline and script of the videotapes, written materials for individual and group viewing, transparencies, handouts, a glossary of selected terms, and a bibliography. The written materials for individuals and groups have been designed to stimulate thinking by participants prior to viewing the programs, to give some focus to discussion afterward, and to attempt to establish some commitment to adopt alternative approaches in the classroom after having worked through the program. The bibliography offers additional sources for participants who want more information. A glossary, outlines of the videotape content, and the scripts of the two videotapes are also appended. (KC)

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Lansing Community College

professional development

ED230812

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

ON

TEACHING ADULTS

Compiled and Edited by
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Lansing Community College
Lansing, Michigan

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THE PROGRAM/PRODUCER/CONSULTANTS

The Professional Development Program at Lansing Community College has produced the adult learner program in a continuing effort to combine technology with expertise to reach larger numbers of staff in different formats. The final product has been the result of contributions from faculty, administrators, and staff throughout the college, as well as a number of people at Michigan State University.

Karen Gotting is a producer/instructor in the Instructional Media Department at Lansing Community College. She has worked for a number of years in a volunteer capacity with WKAR-TV at Michigan State University and taught for 7 years in public schools. When producing the two video tapes, she did extensive research on the topic with the support of the following individuals:

Dr. Larry Standridge is Director of Continuing Education at Lansing Community College. He has a Ph.D. in Adult Education from The Ohio State University. Larry has taught and worked with older students in traditional and non-traditional college settings. He has given a great deal of leadership to teaching telecourses and working to offer alternative approaches to learners.

Dr. S. Joseph Levine is Associate Professor and Director of the Program of Studies in Adult and Continuing Education at Michigan State University. He is well known and respected in the field of adult education. He has developed a variety of instructional materials for the use of learners from elementary age through older university graduate programs.

Dr. Richard E. Gardner, Associate Professor at Michigan State University, has studied and written extensively in the field of career education. He has worked with adult education programs in public schools and higher education. He has assisted school administrators in providing staff development and curriculum design to more adequately meet the career needs of students and staff.

Dr. John Cooper is Director of Professional Development at Lansing Community College. He has given direction to the college's staff development program since its beginning in 1976 and has sought to develop new approaches to train faculty and staff through the use of technologies. He has been active in promoting staff development initiatives at the state and national level.

THE DESIGN OF THE ACTIVITIES

The program was developed in an attempt to use television to reach a larger number of faculty who may not be able to come to campus or take time out of a busy schedule to explore new approaches to teaching. Through the advocacy of Dr. S. Joseph Levine, it has become more than two video tapes. It should serve as a program which will stimulate faculty to think about their teaching practices and to become actively involved with other faculty and administrators to refine current techniques while enhancing classroom learning with alternative approaches.

The programs may be used in at least three settings: First, they can be aired over closed circuit networks for individual viewing with material provided to the viewer in advance and opportunities offered to follow up with colleagues in small groups. Second, they can be used with other materials for on-campus faculty development workshops. Third, they will be available for use in the college's 26 learning centers off-campus, as well as for use with department initiatives to provide in-service.

HOW TO USE THE MATERIALS

PROGRAM MATERIALS.

The program packet includes two video tapes, an outline and script of the video tape, written material for individual and group viewing, a glossary of selected terms, and a bibliography. The written materials for individual and groups have been designed to stimulate some thinking by participants prior to viewing the programs, to give some focus to discussion afterward, and to attempt to establish some commitment to adopt alternative approaches in the classroom after having worked through the program. The bibliography offers additional sources should participants want more information.

VIEWING THE PROGRAM.

Make available to participants the questions for their thought prior to viewing. Allow adequate time for individuals to consider their perspectives independently prior to discussion with others. Encourage those watching at home to invite a friend or colleague to watch with them or offer an opportunity to contact others afterward. It is important that every attempt be made to use the program while modeling the principles of adult learning. Remembering that adults are self-directed, provide an opportunity to draw upon their experience and to share with others in a problem-focused orientation to allow for immediate application to help with their development when working with older students.

The first video tape and discussion should be viewed to allow participants to acknowledge the adult perspective and create some sensitivity to the needs of older learners. It is felt that the program should be shown to faculty prior to viewing by students or perspective students since it is felt that students may develop some expectations focused upon learner centered teaching which may not always be evidenced in the classroom.

The second video tape should be used in concert with other activities which help faculty focus on specific classroom practices. Every effort should be made to encourage faculty to make some commitment to expanding their current practices and being supportive of new alternatives.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS.

Many of the materials have been adopted from TEACHING ADULTS!!TRAINING MATERIALS FOR ADULT EDUCATION STAFF DEVELOPMENT which were developed by the Program of Studies for Adult and Continuing Education, Michigan State University through a project funded by the Michigan Department of Education Adult Extended Learning Services Area, Section 310 (P.L. 91-230.111). Additional materials from this training program are an excellent resource for further in-service.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WORKSHOP.

The materials provided do not give the initial introduction that will be necessary for you to welcome your participants. Your initial welcome should also include a brief review of exactly what will be done during the workshop activity. In this way, the participants will become aware of what is expected of them and will therefore be able to fulfill the objectives for the session and hopefully improve their own understanding of adult education.

HOW ACTIVE WILL YOU BE?

These materials have been designed to allow you to play as active a role as you would like. It is possible to conduct the workshop activities with your role being almost identical to that of a participant. However, if you want to take a more active leadership role, it is possible and relatively easy with these materials.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP.

Take time for evaluation of the workshop at its conclusion. This will be important to determine what participants gained from the activity and will allow you to make plans for future programs.

Don't forget to follow-up and encourage faculty to follow-up with one another. When trying new approaches in the classroom, faculty need opportunities to discuss what they did, how they succeeded, and what may need further refinement. This can only come if the problem-focused orientation of adult learners is followed to allow them to share with colleagues in a supportive manner.

A WORD ABOUT FACILITATION OF PROGRAMS.

Webster's defines facilitate: To free from difficulties or obstacles; make easier; and assist. We think it is helpful if facilitators of the Adult Learner program view themselves as participants like other members of the group. They will want to do some preparation to be familiar with each program's content and ways to assist with the groups' discussions.

Each member of the group may have very different perspectives since the series is designed to get people to consider some new perspectives on teaching adults and their classroom practices. The facilitator should view his/her job as one of making this process somewhat easier by raising questions or giving some direction to points brought out in the group. The facilitator cannot provide answers for others. He/she should be accepting of other perspectives and willing to share his/her thoughts, feelings, or attitudes. Good Luck!!

OVERVIEW

The following materials are provided for use by individuals and groups. They are separate units to be used in two formats.

The first series of questions and exercises are provided for the individual who is seeing the program alone or with a friend without the structure of a workshop. The second set has been taken from TEACHING ADULTS!! for use with small groups during a staff development workshop.

PROGRAM PURPOSE*

The program has been designed to achieve the following:

-to provide an opportunity for faculty to listen to the adult students' perspective and to raise questions about the implications of older student characteristics when teaching;

-to offer a distinction between content/teacher-centered instruction and learner centered instruction and to provide specific classroom practices for use when teaching diverse student groups;

-to provide participants with questions and exercises which get them to:

1) think about teaching adults and, specifically, their teaching of older students;

2) to encourage them to build upon current practices with new strategies (techniques) which help students share responsibility for classroom learning and make available more opportunities for individualized instruction.

*This program may be preceded by a staff development seminar with the purpose of providing information about adult learner populations, changing patterns of traditional and non-traditional student enrollments, and the philosophical and practical implications for education.

VIDEOTAPE I: TEACHING ADULTS:

THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

ACTIVITY TO PRECEDE INDIVIDUAL VIEWING

The first program focuses upon the adult student learner's perspective. Take a few minutes prior to viewing the program to consider how you view yourself as an older student and what you think about adult students in your classroom.

1. Do you think of yourself as an adult learner (student)? If yes, what distinguishes you as an adult learner? (Be specific: age, study patterns, participation in class, family responsibilities.)

2. What experiences do you bring to the class which may contribute to what is learned? How might these experiences make your contribution different from that of younger students?

3. What are some of the reasons you get involved in learning activities?

4. Do you find yourself involved with learning activities other than formal classes? Give some examples.

5. You can consider yourself a successful learner, familiar with the demands of formal education since you probably have at least one degree or certification in a technical training program. Do you find that older students who have not been in the classroom for some time ask more questions, are reluctant to speak, get anxious about tests, or ask for a lot of feedback on their work and progress?

6. What effect do other roles (parent, church leadership, political activities) have on the performance of students in the class?

7. How are older students helpful when they are in your class?

8. What kinds of activities do you include in your classes to gather information about the students' needs and resources?

9. Do you feel you should pay attention to student needs and resources when you teach? Give some reasons for your answer.

10. What is the most difficult challenge you face when teaching in the classroom?

Now that you have given thought to these questions, you should be ready to view the first videotape, TEACHING ADULTS: THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE.

VIDEOTAPE I: TEACHING ADULTS:
THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE
ACTIVITY TO FOLLOW INDIVIDUAL VIEWING

After having viewed the program, you should take time to read the two items titled CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULTS which follow.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULTS WHICH AFFECT LEARNING

1. Uneasiness and possible anxiety resulting from long absence from the classroom.

2. Resistance to change due to "set" ways of doing things.

3. Unfamiliarity and possible frustration with trappings of education - enrollment, registration, grading, record keeping.

4. Preoccupation with outside responsibilities - earning a living, caring for a family, running a home, etc.

5. Approach learning with a strong sense of responsibility and come to class voluntarily.

6. Bring a broad background of experience to the classroom.

7. Need to feel that time is well spent and that material is relevant and practical.

8. May want social satisfaction and interaction through informal class organization.

Adapted from: Consumer Education in An Age of Adaptation, by Sally R. Campbell.
Sears Educator Resource Series.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULTS - PART II

Learning Characteristics of ADULTS	Adapting Content and Techniques to Meet Their Needs
Uneasiness and possible anxiety resulting from long absence from the classroom.	Create an easy, informal, friendly atmosphere. Ask what they feel they will contribute to class in terms of the content or concepts to be covered.
Resistance to change due to "set" ways of doing things.	Provide for the group to analyze situations which can lead to inner motivation for change rather than outside pressure or "telling." Ask for "I do it this way" contributions.
Unfamiliarity and possible frustration with trappings of education - enrollment, registration, grading, record keeping.	De-emphasize these aspects in the classroom when possible. Streamline roll taking, record keeping, and other routine tasks unrelated to learning. Avoid words "homework" or "assignment." Use "bring examples for discussion," "be aware of," etc.
Preoccupation with outside responsibilities - earning a living, caring for a family, running a home, etc.	Relate content to real-life problems. Use real-life situations and experiences in problem-sovling. Include content designed to make life a little bit easier and more satisfying for students. Ask participants to choose subjects they need and can use now if possible.
Approach learning with a strong sense of responsibility and come to class voluntarily.	Keep interest alive by making classes challenging and stimulating. Give students an opportunity to evaluate and make suggestions during the course, but be willing to accept negative evaluations and to implement change.
Bring a broad background of experience to the classroom.	Use personal experiences of students in planning and teaching. Create an opportunity for students to learn from each other.
Need to feel that time is well spent and that material is relevant and practical.	Keep content and approach down-to-earth, practical rather than theoretical. Organize and prepare material in advance so class time is not wasted. Bring in experts to present certain material and viewpoints.
May want social satisfaction and interaction through informal class organization.	Create a relaxed atmosphere. Give students time to socialize, get acquainted, enjoy each other.

Adapted from: Consumer Education in An Age of Adaptation, by Sally R. Campbell. Sears Educator Resource Series.

VIDEOTAPE II: TEACHING ADULTS:

THE INSTRUCTORS' CHALLENGE

ACTIVITY TO PRECEDE INDIVIDUAL VIEWING

The second video tape offers information on five adult learning characteristics, a distinction between content/teacher-centered instruction and learner-centered instruction, and some specific classroom practices for the faculty member's consideration.

You, if you are like many college instructors, may refer to yourself as a subject matter specialist. You are an accountant, a biologist, political scientist, engineer, or health care professional. This identity often leads to some confusion when we speak about the teaching role. It is very important to teach our DISCIPLINE to students who may aspire to careers in our field or need an understanding of history if they are to pursue the general education/liberal arts curriculum.

QUESTION: A distinction has been made by many educators between 1) content/teacher centeredness where the teacher has command of a body of knowledge to pass on to the student, and 2) learner centeredness where the teacher pays attention to the needs, goals, and special interests of the student. When thinking about how you teach in the classroom, consider the clock below which reflects a 50 minute class period. When you think about the class period, how much of the time do you devote to a content centered approach and how much time do you devote to a learner centered approach?

QUESTION: Or, you may want to think of yourself as falling on one end of a continuum. On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you place yourself on the following continuum, going from a content/teacher centered approach to a learner centered approach?

Content Centered Instruction — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 — Learner Centered Instruction

ANSWER: If you divided the time on your clock or allocated a certain percentage to one approach or the other, you have just made a common mistake. The point is not to approach teaching as an either/or process. The instructor's challenge is to present the content in such a way as to involve the learner with the content. Classroom activities must be designed with consideration given to the students which will motivate them.

If, on the other hand, you found it somewhat easier to rate yourself on the scale, you probably recognized that a good instructor cannot be at one end when teaching. Refer to the enclosed handout on shared responsibility which distinguishes between the two approaches and a more integrated approach #3.

YOUR CLASSROOM: What activities do you currently use to involve students with the subject matter?

1. Do you take time to get to know your students and help them to learn about each other?

2. Do you ask questions and allow them to actively discuss their answers?

3. Is opportunity provided for small group exercises?

4. Are students asked for feedback on classroom activities?

5. Is it possible to offer students alternative options for evaluation?

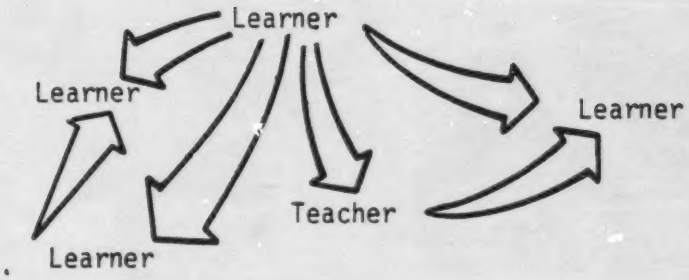
6. Is the classroom arranged so students are focusing all their attention to the front of the room?

7. What other approaches could you use to involve students with the content you are teaching?

NOW!! You are prepared to view the video tape program TEACHING ADULTS: THE INSTRUCTOR'S CHALLENGE.

1.
Teacher
Learners

2.
Teacher
Learners

3. 
Learner
Learner
Learner
Teacher
Learner

VIDEOTAPE II: TEACHING ADULTS

THE INSTRUCTOR'S CHALLENGE

ACTIVITY TO FOLLOW INDIVIDUAL VIEWING

After watching the program, please take time to prepare a plan for your classes to build upon current practices or introduce some new activity.

1. Identify one or two classroom practices which you currently use and would like to improve or which are new practices you would like to try. (e.g., questioning techniques, learning contracts, programmed instruction, small group discussions, etc.)

2. Where can you get additional information on the practice(s) you identified?

-instructional design specialist
-literature search
-colleague
-staff development office
-department chair
-curriculum development committee
-state department of education
-other

3. How will you use this new practice in the classroom?

4. With what colleagues might you talk about this practice, share successes, seek support? Would you consider asking them to observe your class?

5. If the practice does not meet your expectations when first used, what can you do to refine it?

6. How much time are you willing to commit to exploring the potential of this new approach? (e.g., one class period, one term, several terms.)

VIDEOTAPE I: TEACHING ADULTS:
THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE
ACTIVITY TO PRECEDE GROUP VIEWING

The following activity is designed to get workshop participants to talk about their own learning experiences. They will identify some of the characteristics of the experience and their contribution to it to identify common perspectives as adult learners.

PURPOSE: The individual activity and group discussion will permit participants to: 1) identify characteristics that make learning enjoyable and of value to them; 2) view themselves as adult learners; 3) discuss their perceptions and experiences with other educators.

ACTIVITY: Describing a learning experience.

I. Each participant should answer the following independently:

1. What recent formal learning program or class have you participated in that you found of value and enjoyable?

2. Describe some of the characteristics that made it a good class or learning activity for you.

3. What class or formal learning activity can you think of which you consider the worst (or one of the worst) you have ever experienced?

4. Describe some of the characteristics that made it a poor class or learning activity.

II. After each individual has had time to work independently, the group leader or facilitator should ask the group to report what they wrote. Their responses should be recorded on a blackboard or flip chart.

The group should then take some time to discuss what the implications are for teachers in the classroom.

They might also talk about how they, as a teacher, might assume the role of learner and teacher in the classroom.

VARIATION: The group leader might choose to have the group work on selected questions from the earlier exercise provided for individual viewers.

Now the group should be ready to view the first videotape TEACHING ADULTS: THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE.

VIDEOTAPE I: TEACHING ADULTS:
THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE
ACTIVITY TO FOLLOW GROUP VIEWING

After viewing the program, the group leaders should take a few minutes to do the following:

1) allow the group to offer their reactions to the videotape;

2) review the four (4) points made in the program:

a. Adult students have broader experiences than the traditional (18-22 age) student. These experiences need to be considered by the instructor.

b. It is important that the instructor be aware of the reasons adult students have for enrolling in their class.

c. Adult students who are new to the college classroom may have anxieties and lack confidence about being a student. The instructor needs to pay attention to student needs to overcome these anxieties and build confidence to succeed.

d. Adult students are often actively pursuing various roles in his life besides that of student: parent, professional, community volunteer, political activist, etc. Instructors need to consider the needs of adult students in relation to the demands of these roles.

3) introduce the topic of andragogy using the over-head provided;

4) handout the take home sheet "A Comparison of the Assumptions and Designs of Pedagogy and Andragogy."

How We Learn
Transparency 1

ANDRAGOGY

ADULT LEARNERS ARE:

1. Self – Directed
2. Rich in Experience
3. Concerned with their Development
4. Problem – Focused
5. Desiring Immediate Application

A COMPARISON OF THE ASSUMPTIONS AND DESIGNS OF PEDAGOGY AND ANDRAGOGY

ASSUMPTIONS		
	Pedagogy	Andragogy
Self-Concept	Dependency	Increasing Self-Directiveness
Experience	Of little worth	Learners are a rich resource for learning
Readiness	Biological development, social pressure	Developmental tasks of social roles
Time Perspective	Postponed Application	Immediacy of Application
Orientation to learning	Subject centered	Problem centered

DESIGN ELEMENTS		
	Pedagogy	Andragogy
Teacher	Omniscient Omnipotent	Lessened Power Can be Challenged
Student	Learning in prescribed fashion is his major occupation	Learning is secondary to other occupations
Climate	Authority-oriented, Formal, Competitive	Mutuality, Respectful, Collaborative, Informal
Planning	By teacher	Mechanism for mutual planning
Diagnosis of needs	By teacher	Mutual self-diagnosis
Formulation of Objectives	By teacher	Mutual negotiation
Design	Logic of subject matter, Content units	Sequenced in terms of readiness, Problem units
Activities	Transmittal techniques	Experiential techniques (inquiry)
Evaluation	By teacher	Mutual re-diagnosis of needs, Mutual measurement of program

VIDEOTAPE II: TEACHING ADULTS:
THE INSTRUCTOR'S CHALLENGE
ACTIVITY TO PRECEDE GROUP VIEWING

The second video tape offers information on five adult learning characteristics, a distinction between content/teacher centered instruction and learner-centered instruction, and some specific classroom practices for the faculty members' consideration.

I. Take a few minutes to briefly explain or define content/teacher centered instruction and learner-centered instruction, using the overheads provided.

CONTENT/TEACHER CENTERED INSTRUCTION looks upon the teacher as having command of a body of knowledge to pass on to the student.

LEARNER CENTERED INSTRUCTION suggests that the teacher must be sensitive to the needs, goals, and special interests of the students.

II. Ask the participants to discuss, in small groups, under what circumstances do they feel each of the two approaches to instruction is appropriate? (Allow about 15 to 20 minutes).

III. Now introduce the concept of shared responsibility.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY is the idea in adult education classrooms that the teacher and the learners, or the facilitator and the learners--the adults--have a joint sharing of responsibility for the instructional setting. In the shared responsibility setting, the teacher brings his or her expertise to the situation and asks for input from the learner. This input can be in terms of the content or focus of the instruction.

IV. The key to this approach is to find a means to motivate learners to become involved with the content and what is happening in the classroom. Ask the group to consider why such an approach is important to classroom teaching.

V. Now, let the group view the second videotape, TEACHING ADULTS: THE INSTRUCTOR'S CHALLENGE.

CONTENT/TEACHER CENTERED INSTRUCTION

LOOKS UPON THE TEACHER AS HAVING COMMAND OF A BODY OF KNOWLEDGE TO PASS ON TO THE STUDENT.

LEARNER CENTERED INSTRUCTION

SUGGESTS THAT THE TEACHER MUST BE SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS, GOALS, AND SPECIAL INTERESTS OF THE STUDENTS.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IS THE IDEA IN ADULT EDUCATION CLASSROOMS THAT THE TEACHER AND THE LEARNERS, OR THE FACILITATOR AND THE LEARNERS--THE ADULTS--HAVE A JOINT SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING. IN THE SHARED RESPONSIBILITY SETTING, THE TEACHER BRINGS HIS OR HER EXPERTISE TO THE SITUATION AND ASKS FOR INPUT FROM THE LEARNER. THIS INPUT CAN BE IN TERMS OF THE CONTENT OR FOCUS OF THE INSTRUCTION.

VIDEOTAPE II: TEACHING ADULTS

THE INSTRUCTOR'S CHALLENGE

ACTIVITY TO FOLLOW GROUP VIEWING

I. The video tape, TEACHING ADULTS: THE INSTRUCTOR'S CHALLENGE, offered specific classroom practices to promote shared responsibility for the instructional setting. They were:

1) allow frequent dialogue
2) organize a committee for feedback
3) involve learners in evaluation
4) arrange the room for sharing
5) encourage students to get to know one another
6) choose techniques that involve ACTIVE participation
7) offer contract learning as an option.

II. Have faculty members consider the practices suggested and offer their own ideas. Using a blackboard or flip chart, post the list and add to it. (Allow approximately 15 to 20 minutes.)

III. Ask each participant to identify one or two practices they would like to refine or begin to use in their classroom. Allow 5 minutes for each participant to write down his or her choices.

IV. Ask those who have listed a new practice they would like to use to discuss with the group how this might best be implemented in their classroom.

V. Take time to have the group discuss additional resources/information for faculty who may want to try a new practice:

-instructional design specialist
-professional resource center
-colleagues
-literature and literature search
-staff development office
-curriculum development committee
-state department of education
-other.

VI. Have faculty discuss the question: How long should they continue to practice a new classroom technique in order to become comfortable with it?

VII. Ask the group how they would be willing to help one another and if they would agree to return as frequently as desired to review their success with different approaches.

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GLOSSARY

ADULT LEARNERS - Adult learners are defined by this program as those students over the age of 25, as contrasted with traditional-age college students, the 18-22 year olds. However, adult students should not be thought of only in terms of chronological age, but rather the following characteristics of adult learners: They are: 1) self-directed; 2) rich in experience; 3) concerned with their development; 4) problem focused; 5) desiring immediate application.

CONTENT/TEACHER CENTERED INSTRUCTION - Faculty members are cast in a role of the expert who has command of a body of knowledge within a discipline to pass on to the students.

LEARNER CENTERED INSTRUCTION - Faculty members are expected to teach with an emphasis placed upon student needs, goals, and special interests.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY - Shared responsibility is the idea in adult education classrooms that the teacher and the learners, or the facilitator and the learners--the adults--have a joint sharing of responsibility for the instructional setting. In the shared responsibility setting, the teacher brings his or her expertise to the situation and asks for input from the learner. This input can be in terms of the content or focus of the instruction.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION - Ideally individualizing instruction means that a student will be engaged in learning those things that are most relevant to him/herself at all times. It does not necessarily mean setting up an instructional program which treats every learner separately and individually. While individual projects may be an important aspect of individualized instruction, it is necessary to recognize that group activities can allow individuals to express themselves and value their own identity through personal contributions.

VIDEOTAPE I: TEACHING ADULTS:
THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE
OUTLINE

I. Adult learners are returning to the classroom in larger numbers.

- A. Adult students are older people who have re-entered a formal educational setting.
- B. They often combine the student experience with other roles such as parent, employee, community activity, etc.
- C. The reasons they return to college are varied.
- D. At the same time, the number of traditional age students are decreasing.
- E. The result is that we are becoming educators of adults.

II. The program introduces the viewer to the subject of teaching adults.

- A. The viewpoints and concerns of adult students are explored.
- B. The viewpoints of faculty and administrators who work closely with them are also presented.

III. Adult student differences include:

- A. Age - maturity.
- B. Motivation - they come to the classroom with a specific goal in mind.
- C. Experience level - they bring a rich background to the classroom.
- D. Application - they look for an immediate application of what is learned.

IV. As students, adults are:

- A. Eager to clarify course objectives and get on with them.
- B. Read the assignments regardless of whether they will be tested.
- C. Often prepared to address the instructor as a peer, but uncomfortable to speak in class.
- D. Quick to resist work which is redundant or a waste of time.
- E. Prepared to change instructors or programs if their needs are not being met.
- F. People who see themselves as different in some ways from college age students and want their instructors to respect those differences.

V. The initial decision of older students to enroll is often beset with anxiety. Instructors can play an important role in easing their anxieties. These anxieties may arise from:

- A. The fact that they haven't been in the classroom for a number of years.
- B. A concern about competing with younger students.
- C. The need to re-orient themselves to study habits.

VI. There are a number of reasons adult students overcome these fears to return to college.

A. To seek a social outlet/environment.
B. Seek a challenge--add a new dimension to their life.
C. Add to their credentials with a new skill.
D. To compete academically for personal satisfaction.
E. To enroll with a particular instructor they heard was good.
F. Because they need a class as part of a degree program.

VII. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHY STUDENTS ARE IN OUR CLASS IF WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT HELPING THEM, IN EVEN A RUDIMENTARY WAY, TO MEET THEIR NEEDS.

A. Reasons for enrolling are highly individual.
B. Adults, however are here because they expect a formal learning experience to affect some change in their lives.

VIII. For adults, there are many pitfalls along the way.

A. They juggle other commitments and responsibilities which may conflict with class expectations:
   1. job related assignments
   2. sick children at home.
B. WHATEVER THE SITUATION, INSTRUCTORS FREQUENTLY ARE IN A POSITION TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BY OFFERING ALTERNATIVES, ENCOURAGMENT, AND SUPPORT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THEY GIVE STUDENTS THE MESSAGE THAT THEY ARE:
   1. approachable
   2. reasonable
   3. realistic
   4. and willing to help the student.

IX. When talking about teaching adults, we are talking about the most difficult challenge of the teaching profession--addressing the ever-widening range of interests, needs and skills that come together in a typical class.
A. As the number of adult students grows, the challenge becomes even more complicated.
B. The next program will explore a well known theory of adult learning and use it to develop specific ideas of integrating adults in our classes.

VIDEOTAPE II: TEACHING ADULTS

THE INSTRUCTORS' CHALLENGE

OUTLINE

I. Review of the first program.

A. Defined adult students as those over the age of 25, and contrasted them with traditional age college students, the 18-22 year olds.
B. Older students:
1. feel different from younger students
2. that entering or re-entering college can be a scary experience for some
3. that adults have many other commitments outside of class
4. their reasons for enrolling are as varied as their personal and academic backgounds
5. the only thing adults have in common is their diversity.
C. The second program focuses upon the enormous challenge instructors face when confronted with that diversity.

II. A question often asked is whether it is necessary or desireable to teach them differently from younger students.

A. THE QUESTION MORE APPROPRIATELY SEEMS TO BE: HOW DO WE TEACH THE TREMENDOUSLY DIVERSE GROUPS THAT HAVE BECOME THE NORM IN MOST COMMUNITY COLLEGES?
B. The program distinguishes between LEARNER CENTERED INSTRUCTION and CONTENT/TEACHER CENTERED INSTRUCTION and suggests a more balanced approach of SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.

III. CONTENT/TEACHER CENTERED INSTRUCTION defined:

A. Content/teacher centered instruction suggests that the content and teacher are the major factors in most teaching-learning experiences.
B. When the instructor plans for the learning experience, the factors considered are:
1. the nature of the content
2. learning objectives
3. class size
4. the limitations of time, space, and institutional policies.
C. There is the assumption that one well-planned learning experience is appropriate for every student.

IV. LEARNER CENTERED INSTRUCTION defined:
A. In learner centered instruction, the emphasis is placed on the students and their specific learning needs and objectives.
B. Factors considered with the learner centered instruction are:
1. student learning needs and objectives
2. minimal limitations of space, time and institutional policies.
3. student preferences.

V. ANDRAGOGY is defined by Malcolm Knowles as "the art and science of helping adults learn." Knowles recognizes five adult learning characteristics:
   A. Adults are SELF-DIRECTED - they have made a decision to participate in a class independent of external demands.
   B. Adults have a rich background of EXPERIENCE they bring to the classroom.
   C. Adults learn because of DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES in their lives.
   D. PROBLEM FOCUSED - the reason adults come to formal education is because they would like resolution for a problem.
   E. Finally, adult learners seek immediate application for what is learned through formal education.

VI. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY for the learning situation proposed that both the teacher/facilitator and learner accept a part in planning for the learning.
   A. Adults may not want to provide the input to the teacher since past experiences have been more teacher centered.
   B. Instructors are left to design methods, techniques and procedures so that the learner will begin to understand and value his or her input and be willing to share that input with the instructor.
   C. Shared responsibility attempts to draw a balance between content/ teacher centeredness and learner centeredness. It considers equally the three factors:
      1. the content
      2. the teacher, and
      3. the learner.

VII. Specific techniques are offered which instructors can use to begin to create a "shared responsibility" environment. They are:
   A. Encourage students to get to know one another.
   B. Arrange the classroom furnishings for sharing.
   C. Allow for frequent dialogue.
   D. Organize a committee for feedback to the instructor.
   E. Involve learners in the evaluation of class work.
   F. Take advantage of breaks to listen to students.
   G. When possible, choose techniques that involve ACTIVE participation.

VIII. Another approach is to individualize instruction. Such an approach allows students to choose possible projects based on their personal interests.
   A. It does not mean isolating students or treating every learner separately and individually.
   B. The intent is not to abandon group interaction but appeal to individual interests.

IX. GRADING CONTRACTS are offered as one example of individualizing instruction. The approach:
   A. Lets competencies be achieved.
   B. Allows students to determine how the competencies are to be accomplished.
   C. Allows students to determine the means of evaluation.

X. The program shifted the focus from teaching adults to teaching a diverse student population.
   A. It was suggested that WHO is as important as what and how learning takes place.

SCRIPT TAPE #1

PAULA: (Well) the children were in school all day. I didn't have enough at home to keep me busy. I kept thinking there must be more to life than sitting around waiting for somebody to come home. And I got sort of depressed about it and I thought "This is ridiculous. Why not go back to school. You know you were going to some day. Well, this is the day. So I came back. I knew I needed more education and this was just the perfect time to get it. I scheduled morning classes, and that way I leave after the kids do, I'm home before they are and it works out perfectly.

TEACHING ADULTS: THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE. A PRESENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE, with John Cooper, Director, Professional Development.

PAULA: I went to college out of high school. I didn't really want to go, I just didn't have anything better to do and my family expected it. I got bad grades and after about a year I quit. You know, what is the use? I got a job, worked for a while, then I got married and had kids and it was 10 years before I went back to work. And during those 10 years, plus the 5 that I've worked since then, I've more or less decided what I want to do, where I want to go, and I want to get there as quickly as I can, but on the way I want to learn everything that will be necessary to know when I go out to work in that field.

COOPER: Paula Robbins is one of the thousands of adult students on this community college campus--people over the age of 25 who, for one reason or another, have re-entered a formal educational setting. She combines her part-time student career with homemaking, parenting, and a part-time job. Her ambition is to acquire the skills and credentials needed to improve her job potential. As more adults like Paula enroll in community college classes, we find the number of traditional age students--those who are 18 to 22 years old--decreasing. The upshot of this demographic change in student population is that we are becoming educators of adults--whether or not we intended to --simply because they are showing up in our classrooms in increasing numbers.

This program introduces you to the subject of teaching adults by exploring some of the viewpoints and concerns of adult students, as well as those who work closely with them. Dr. Larry Standridge, Director of Continuing Education at Lansing Community Colelge, talks about some differences.

STANDRIDGE: Well, I think there's some obvious differences...age-adult students could be 70, 60, 50, 35...motivation-traditional age student has a limited amount of motivation and functions best under almost forced learning situation...the adult student...much busier... comes in under a goal commitment...high degree of motivation...may not have degree of motivation with an 18-22 year old. Experience level-lived longer, experienced more, greater backlog that can be drawn upon. More ready application for their learning-the traditional student is studying so that "when", if not immediacy of application, may not be most positive types of learning. Rate of learning-usually achieve fastest clip of learning somewhere around 25 years of age,

and then there is a decrease in the speed of learning, but a corresponding increase in retention level. 65 year old student may learn slower, they tend to retain more of what learned. To say that there is no difference avoids the obvious and not-so-obvious.

COOPER: Adult students are not typical college students. They are more mature, more experienced and highly motivated. They have taken on the various responsibilities of adulthood--home, family, job, military service, community work--and they take these responsibilities seriously and they bring that seriousness into the classroom with them. As students, they are eager to clarify the objectives of the course work and get on with them; most will read the assignments whether or not they will be tested and they frequently ask for additional work. Likewise, they may regard you, their instructor, as an age-group peer. They may feel comfortable calling you by your first name and feel silly raising their hand before they can speak. They will resist course work that is redundant or a waste of time, and are inclined to change instructors or programs if their needs aren't being met. In short, they see themselves as different in some ways from college age students and want their instructors to respect those differences.

JUDY: You know, I don't want to have this little tag that says, "Look at me, she's older", yet, I also resent sometimes being treated as if I was just out of high school, i.e., "We're going to run it this way because I can't trust a few of you, so this is how it is for everyone else." I resent that. You know, I am an adult. I expect to be treated as an adult. Not only in the lectures, but when it comes time for questions. If I do have a question, it's a legitimate question; I'm not saying it to use up time. Assignments--I'd like them to be worthwhile. I don't want them to be just busy work.

RICHARD: Of course, I'm older. I'd say I have experience from being out in the job market. I've experienced life to the fullest, and so consequently I have a lot better idea of what education is and what it'll do for you, I believe.

PAULA: Well, for one thing, I've had more actual experience in life. I've worked at a lot of different jobs, and there's a lot of things I've picked up on those jobs that I don't need to come back to school to learn.

LIZ: I think the main difference I've seen so far with the kids in my data processing class is that it's kind of a party time--you know. I want to really learn something.

JUDY: I want to hear what the instructor has to say...not just put in time--where younger people talk to friends...I'd like to hear what's going on.

PAULA: The hardest thing about that whole course is reading the textbook and staying awake long enough to get through the chapter, because so many of the things that I'm running across in the book I already know. I don't need to read about them again. My learning, I feel, is better than book learning because I've lived them. I know how things work. I know that...oh, so many of the things they suggest

in the book, the information they give, high school students probably wouldn't know it. For them, it's good. But, for me, it is wasting my time.

COOPER: In spite of the fact that they perceive themselves as being more experienced, more mature, more serious at times about learning, the initial decision to enroll in college often is beset with anxieties--particularly if it has been many years since they have had any formal schooling. Some may have doubts about whether they can compete academically; others may underestimate their abilities. Usually, a period of adjustment is needed to regain confidence in themselves. Instructors can play an important role in this process.

GOTTING: Kathy, it has been about 15 years since you have been in a formal schooling experience. Were you anxious when you came back to college?

KATHY: Definitely.

GOTTING: Why?

KATHY: First of all, could I compete with 18 year olds. They're fresh and up on things. Also, can I still study? Will I know how to study the right things? Just all sorts of things.

GOTTING: Tell me about the very first course you took.

KATHY: I had a fantastic instructor who was very helpful to <u>all</u> the students, in general. He just always made me feel like he was there if you wanted to talk to him or call him. He was interested if you came to class which was a shock to me. I didn't think that when you got to college that the instructor cared if you came to class or not.

LIZ: Yes! After having been out of school for 17 years, it's like...do I still remember how to study!

NAIDA: Yes, I think...in fact, I've talked to a lot of adults who say I'd like to go back to school but I'm afraid I can't learn anything anymore. I'm afraid I've forgotten how to study.

HAYS: What I find is that this kind of learner needs a lot of nuturing. They need lots of encouragement and they need lots of reinforcement. But once they get it, then they really blossom and they just go to town.

STANDRIDGE: I'm speaking out of my experience in counseling adults as they come in to a college experience. (I did that for 5 years.) and found that a common characteristic among most adults is fear--a fear of failure--the fear of being embarrassed--being put in a classroom situation with younger students and not being able to perform at the same level. Now, interestingly, those same adults that had tremendous fear functioned at a much higher level or more intense level than did the younger students but they always seemed to have fear. There are some adults who do not have fear but there are many who do. And if that fear is not dealt with, sometimes they can be washed out.

JUDY: And, you know, it's anxiety. You go in and you think can I even cut this? He doesn't know that I haven't gone to school for 12 years as far as a formalized class. He doesn't know that I haven't written a paper, that I haven't taken an exam, per se, in a lot of years. Can I cut it? Can I even do it again? Sure, in high school I could, but that was a long time ago, and can I get back into a really structured class, where, you know, I'm no different than the 19 or 20 year old next to me. That was probably my biggest concern. But, it was also a challenge. I think I can, or if I can't, I don't have to get a certain grade point average so that Mom and Dad will still pay for school. I don't have to worry about that, but yet, I guess for my own ego, I want to know that I can still do it.

ABE: Took real estate course. Heard it was tough. I was scared to enroll. But took it as a challenge. Never forget the first test. 125 questions. When I saw it, I wanted to walk out. So engrossed. Looked up. I was the only person in the room. All the other students had left. I said to the instructor, "Are you waiting for me?" He said, "Take your time."

HAYS: I had a middle aged woman who was really worried that she couldn't study the material, and she was extremely anxious. And she said I'm looking at my notes, and I just don't think I have it. I don't have this in my notes, I don't have that, I just can't take notes. I don't know how to do it. So I said, take the very best notes you can this morning, and over break I'll look at your notes. I'll tell you if what you wrote down is what I said, and if you've written down the most important things. During break I went over her notes and the first thing I found was she was writting notes on a very small stenographer's notebook, which does not work for this particular class where you have lots of letter-size handouts and copious material to copy down. So I pointed that out to her, etc....said you're doing a good job...that was the end of. Was that a silly thing to do or to have to do, or is it effective? It took just 10 minutes of my break time and it seemed to be effective for that student.

LEVINE: Those adults that have the fear that get past that fear usually are the ones that find someone in the institution willing to listen to them, some aspect of the individual --of the institution that's willing to respond to them. Those are the ones that seem to make it through okay.

COOPER: There are a number of reasons why adults overcome anxieties and other obstacles in order to become a college student. We found that some are here to find a social outlet. Others are here because they're bored or feeling stagnant and college adds a new dimension to their lives. Many are here to acquire skills that are needed for a job promotion or a job change. A few are here because they have to prove to themselves that they can still compete academically and others enroll in a course because they've heard a particular instructor is excellent. Some adults are in our classes simply because it is required as part of a program or degree. The point here is that it is important to know why an adult is in our class if we are going to talk about helping them, in even a rudimentary way, to meet their needs.

RICHARD: The reason I am here at college is the fact that I am unemployed, and so I needed a job and of course at 51 years old, you don't just go out and find another job. So I went on unemployment and if you've ever been at the unemployment office, why I would say that 99% of the people wouldn't care about being there. And so I decided I couldn't find a job, I was going to go back and retrain myself for another vocation.

LIZ: For me, it was a spur of the moment decision. My friend suggested it, she gave me a catalog...My husband is a computer programmer. I decided to try that to see if I like it.

JUDY: Well, originally it was for a teaching background, because I'm required to teach some classes with my X-ray students and it's real fine that I have all the experience as far as an X-ray Tech. but I don't have any experience as far as teaching. It was easier through continuing education programs here to take some course work and learn teaching methods, some ways that I can get what I know from me out. You know, that's the hardest part. You can know it all, but if you can't present it to students, then you're in trouble.

KATHY: I guess I felt like I had to know more about the world around me. I really had to be more in tune. I was kind of on the fringes when I was at home for so many years taking care of little children. As my youngest one got ready for school I really began to feel I had a little more time to do something. I guess I'm the type of person that has to do something worthwhile, useful, with myself. So, I just started thinking about taking some classes, and that started giving me some self-confidence, which I felt I needed, also.

BARB: Job change, updating previous skills, exhilerating experience, renews one's confidence. I've learned that I can still memorize, I can still function. It's been a long time since I've been a student and I've enjoyed it a lot.

COOPER: Adult students' reasons for enrolling in college are highly individual, but every one of them is here because they are expecting a formal schooling experience to effect some important change in their lives.

KATHY: In fact, it's so important that I'm not willing to back down on this at all. My family is not real enthused about me doing this because I'm not always there to wait on them and all these other things. I'm not willing to sacrifice any more--to do just for them. Now I feel like it's my time to do a little bit of something for myself, along with still doing for the family.

COOPER: As important as college may be for adult students, there are numerous pitfalls along the way. Most adults are part-time students and, in addition to their course work, are juggling many other commitments and responsibilities which may conflict at times with their instructors' expectations. They may have to miss class because of a job-related conference or there may be a sick

child at home. Whatever the situation, instructors frequently are in a position to make the difference by offering alternatives, encouragement, and support.

HAYS: I really have the luxury of having smaller class sizes, usually. The course I've been referring to most often is a maximum of 16 students and with those 16 students, I spend 3 hours of concentrated time...one to one basis...but have taught 100 students. I still maintain that by your demeanor and by the expectations that you set for the students, you can demonstrate week after week, "I am approachable, I am realistic, I am reasonable, and I'm willing to help you." That's a message that I think has to come out.

COOPER: This student stopped attending a class just after mid-term because of complications at home. She didn't contact the instructor to explain and the instructor didn't contact her. She failed the course.

NAIDA: I got an F in the class, but I learned a lot. In fact, I would be tempted to take the class again to finish what I missed out on in the last part of the term. I felt embarrassed about not going back to class, but I didn't know what to do about it and I really did think if I couldn't complete it, that was just it. I had to take the F. I had no idea there were any options available.

HAYS: The point is, the adult learner is part of a larger body of experiences than school right here. The younger learner, the typical undergrad that we've made reference to, comes to school and school becomes sort of their whole life. The adult learner isn't like that. And very often it's their life experiences that sometimes get in the way of, or have to make us make adjustments for, their learning experiences while they're here. A couple of examples come to mind and they sound like made-up examples, but they aren't. Once I had a student who came to me and said, "I missed class last week and I missed the quiz because, well, you're too young to have teenagers, but my teenage son swiped my car and wrecked it, and I didn't have anyway to get here." And I thought wow, what kind of an excuse is that? But it was really quite accurate. Another student, during final exam week came to me and said, "I'm just so distraught. My mother had a stroke this week and I'm so concerned about her." There are many types of situations like this and as a faculty member you really have to remem er that Yes! this person is not just a student. They're a parent, a spouse a church worker. They're in everything. And that really does impact their learning and I think we should make adjustments for it.

COOPER: In this program, we have suggested that to effectively teach adults, we must respect their maturity, broader experiences and higher degree of motivation. It means knowing why they are taking your course, adjusting at times to their personal situations and nuturing those who are new at being a college student. We are saying that adult students have become yet another group whose presence requires special insight and additional teaching strategies. So when we talk about teaching adults, we're really talking about the most difficult challenge of the teaching profession--and that is, addressing the

ever-widening range of interests, needs and skills that come together in a typical class. As the number of adult students grows, that challenge becomes even more complicated. In our next program, we will examine a well-known theory of adult learning and use it to develop specific ideas for integrating adults into our classes.

HAYS: I love teaching. I enjoy especially the adult learner. Because the people that come back, particularly the adult learner, that come back to my continuing ed classes, are just so eager. And as a teacher, you can't ask for a better class to teach. If somebody's there because they really want to and they lap it up and they're loving it, even though they might not love it every minute, there's quite a bit in there for you.

PAUL: In the last program, we defined adult students as those over the age of 25, and contrasted them with traditional-age college students, the 18-22 year olds. We learned that the older students feel different from the younger students, that entering or re-entering college can be a scary experience for some, that adults have many other commitments outside of class, and that their reasons for enrolling are as varied as their personal and academic backgrounds. In fact, just about the only thing adult students have in common is their diversity! In this program, we focus on the enormous challenge instructors face when confronted with that diversity--a diversity that exists not just among the older students, but among the younger students as well.

MARY: The question frequently asked about adult students is whether it is necessary or desirable to teach them differently from younger students. If so, what is it that should be different? And furthermore, can we possibly consider teaching adults one way and younger students another way when most of our classes are made up of many ages--young, old, and in-between? The truth is, there is a larger issue here than merely teaching adults. And that is, how do we teach the tremendously diverse groups that have become the norm in most community colleges? It is not only older students that are bringing a diversity to the student population; the traditional-age students are looking more non-traditional every day. By 1985, more than half of the 18-22 year olds will be part-time students, combining college with jobs. At this institution, less than 10% of them will be transferring to 4-year colleges. So, the wide range of ages, abilities and student expectations that we're dealing with today can be expected to broaden in the future.

PAUL: The question then, is, "How do we teach students whose only common trait is their diversity?" It is within the literature of adult education where we find the answer--or, at least, one important part of the answer--and the learner-centered instruction. What is learner-centered instruction? In order to define it, we first need to look at its counterpart: content/teacher-centered instruction. Typically, when an instructor plans for learning experiences, a number of factors are considered, including the nature of the content and learning objectives, class size, and the limitations of time, space and institutional policies. The instructor's preferences for teaching methods determines how the learning takes place. Thus the major factors in most teaching-learning experiences are the content and the teacher. And usually, in content/teacher-centered instruction, there is the assumption that one well-planned learning experience is appropriate for every student in the class.

MARY: In learner-centered instruction, the emphasis is placed on the students and their specific learning needs and objectives. Realistically speaking, a "pure" learner-centered approach probably is not possible or appropriate in most formal educational settings. A teaching approach, however, which considers equally all three factors, the content, the teacher, and the learner, can be both realistic and appropriate in most teaching-learning experiences. There are minimal limitations imposed by time, space and school policies. And the way in which the student learns is determined by student preference. In learner-centered instruction, the learner

becomes the major factor, the teacher and content are secondary, and there is the assumption that only a variety of learning experiences can meet the learning needs of a diverse student group.

PAUL: The viewpoint that the learner is an essential ingredient in any learning experience is probably best exemplified by a concept of adult learning called "andragogy." "Andragogy" is concerned with helping adults learn and is a term that has been made popular by Malcolm Knowles, Professor of Education at Boston University and North Carolina State University. Knowles identified five adult learning characteristics that need to be recognized by instructors. He says that adult learners are: self-directed, rich in experience, concerned with their development, problem focused, and desiring immediate application for their learning. Dr. Joseph Levine, Professor of Adult & Continuing Education at Michigan State University, is an advocate of the concept of andragogy. He talks about the first of Knowles' five characteristics of adult learners.

LEVINE: First of all, Knowles suggests that the key characteristic of andragogy is that adults as learners are <u>self-directed</u>. He says that adult education is to be built on the assumption that it is our decision to be here. In the pedagogical style of formal schooling for children, it is assumed that each child is a dependent learner. In adult education the learner is self-directed. Throughout our day-to-day lives, we do many things in self directed ways. We decide what we will eat, what we will do and we decide that we will compete an educational experience. It is then important for the adult educator to recognize this and begin to treat the adult as a self-directed learner. However, Knowles suggests that many teachers forget that adults are self-directed and attempt to treat them as dependent learners. He says also that many adults have a view of what school is supposed to be like. Because of that, they come in trying to pretend that they are dependent learners. Knowles says that the challenge to us as adult educators is to move to a self-directed type of learning, allowing the learners to make decisions in the learning environment.

MARY: The second characteristic considers the learners experience. Knowles says that adults have acquired a reservoir of experience that can be a valuable resource in their learning. If given the opportunity many adults will be able to draw upon some aspect of their experience and relate it to the content of the course. The instructor's challenge, then is to encourage adult students utilize their personal experiences in their learning.

PAUL: Knowles' third characteristic considers the learners readiness to learn. Adults are ready to learn new things because of developmental phases in their lives. That is, they are ready to learn when changes occur in their roles as workers, spouses, parents, members of organizations, and leisure time users.

LEVINE: The fourth characteristic is that adults are problem focused in their learning. The reason they come to learning, to education, is that they would like a resolution for a problem. If we are smart as adult educators, we will provide opportunity for our learners to let us know what problems they are here to work on. This is not a one-shot opportunity--throughout our teaching we have to allow adults to participate in such a way that we will find out problems they are wanting to deal with. Now, of course, once we find out what these problems are, it is up to us to somehow begin to assist the adult in their resolution of them.

MARY: Knowles' fifth characteristic considers the learner's time perspective. He says that many adults come into an educational setting because of an inadequacy in coping with some life problem. Because they are looking for a solution to the problem, they want to be able to apply tomorrow what is learned today.

PAUL: Now, an andragogical approach leans very much toward learner-centeredness, which, as we stated earlier, often is difficult to manage in a formal educational setting. The reason we have introduced the concept of andragogy in this program is because it presents an "ideal" toward which we might work. After all, who would argue against the benefits of providing opportunities for students to utilize their past experiences in their learning, making our content relevant to students' immediate goals, and allowing students to be self-directed? However, no matter how much we might not like the ideal of andragogy, the primary concerns for most of us are practicality, efficiency and the sheer numbers of students who must be evaluated with a grade at the end of each term.

LEVINE: I'm not sure that any of us could really facilitate a 100% learner-centeredness situation--nor do we want to--but I think we owe it to ourselves and our students to hear it, to see it, to sense what it is. On the one hand, we have content-centeredness, where we make all the decisions. The content guides what goes on in the classroom. The learners are very secondary to the content. You are here; here is the content! On the other extreme is learner-centeredness, where we sit down and we work with the learner and the learner has the strongest say in what he or she would like to do. Now, I'm not sure that we can achieve that, but I think we can achieve something in between. I don't think we have to be guided one hundred percent by a curriculum focused type of instruction. I think we can listen, we can allow learners opportunities. I think sharing of responsibility is an important thing for an adult educator, not giving up responsibilitiy. I think the adult educator carries responsibility into the classroom, but is willing to share some of it with the learners. The learners, likewise, have lots of responsibilities over their lives and are willing to share some of that with the instructor. And the whole concept, I think, of shared responsibility creates a median somewhere between content-based instruction and learner-based instruction.

MARY: Dr. Levine believes there are many ways instructors can begin to focus more on the learner. Sharing responsibility is one of them.

LEVINE: What exactly does sharing of responsibility mean? It means that the planning of specific lessons, the planning of specific focus for the course, is something that is done jointly between the teacher and learners. This doesn't suggest, of course, that the teacher abdicates responsibility and gives it all to the learners. No--in a shared responsibility setting, the teacher brings his or her expertise to the situation and asks for input from the learners. Input can be in terms of the content or focus of the instruction, could be in terms of specific assignments that will be handled, or could be in terms of how the learning will be evaluated. In any case, the sharing of responsibility between learner and teacher is an exciting one that can be fully developed in adult education settings. At first, the adult learner may not want to provide the input to the teacher on the content. However, it's up to the teacher to design methods, techniques and procedures so that the learner will begin to understand and value his or her input and be willing to share that input with the instructor, with the rest of the class. Such a technique could be as simple as asking learners how they liked the last lesson, listening to what they say and making changes for the next lesson based on their feedback. This simple technique is one way to begin to allow the learner the feeling of sharing responsibility for the instructional environment. Now, let's look at three simple diagrams. The first diagram describes a very traditional instructional setting. It shows that the teacher carries all responsibility. The communication is one way--from the teacher to the learners. This is indicative of a very formal type of instruction where the teacher has all responsibility and the focus then of the teacher is to "deliver" the information to the learners. Let's look now at the second diagram. There we can see exactly the opposite condition, one where it looks like the teacher has abdicated or given up all of the responsibility. The communications are still one way. Now it's from the learners going to the teacher. It looks like, in fact, the learners are asking questions of the teacher. The teacher, however, doesn't seem to be responding. Now, in the third diagram, we see the condition of shared responsibility. We see the interaction between teacher and learners and between learners and each other where it looks like there is total involvement and the teacher is one of the many participants in the interaction. Each participant has responsibility and people are willing to share these responsibilities with each other. The three diagrams are very simple, but they clearly indicate what we desire when we're trying to share responsibility with our learners. It's an exciting concept and one that can move us greatly ahead in designing an instructional program that truly responds to the uniqueness of adults as learners. Now it may not be possible to operate in shared responsibility mode one hundred percent of the time. But, it's something that we as adult educators can begin to move a lot closer to--a way to begin to share responsibility with the adults that exist in our instructional settings.

PAUL: Many instructors feel they have to be at the front of the classroom carrying the ball every minute. Letting go of that notion can be an enormous relief. There are many simple techniques an instructor can use to begin to create a "shared responsibility" environment. As Dr. Levine mentioned a few minutes ago, it can be as simple as asking learners how they liked the last lesson and making changes based on their responses. On the first day of class structure an opportunity for students to get to know each other. By encouraging them to learn something about each other early in the term, you create a climate for the exchange of ideas and problems for the remainder of the term. Learning usually does not begin until the learner feels at ease. The physical arrangement of the classroom is important. If you want the students to share ideas and experiences with one another, place the tables or chairs so that students are looking at each other rather than the front of the room. Allow frequent dialogue, even if it's only 10 minutes as part of an instructional period. Say to your students, "Let's relax for a few minutes and talk about what we've just heard or done. Let's talk about it in terms of your own experience. Does it make sense? Do you have in your own experience examples of what I've just presented to you?" Then, let them share with one another! Organize a committee of learners to act as a source of feedback to you. Every week or so, meet with the committee to hear their reactions to how the class has been going. (What have been the good aspects? What aspects need improving? What other topics should be covered?) Reduce the use of grades as the only form of feedback. Create situations where the learners are able to provide feedback to each other. For example, have learners hand in two copies of an assignment; one copy is read by you and the other is read by a classmate. Both readers provide feedback. Never underestimate the value of breaks. Some of the most valued learning experience could take place next to the drinking fountain. When there is a choice among several teaching techniques, choose the one that involves students in the most active participation. When students are actively involved in a learning experience, they are more likely to feel responsible for their learning.

MARY: Another approach to making the learner an important part of the teaching-learning process is to develop ways to individualize or personalize your instructional methods. One common way of doing this is through the use of student projects. Projects come in many forms--reading, reports, viewing, interview building, etc. In any case, an instructor provides a list of possible projects from which the student can choose, based on their personal interests. In addition, the instructor might identify several students who can design their own projects with minimal input by the instructor. Individualizing, however, does not mean isolating the students from one another.

LEVINE: Individualizing does not necessarily mean we're setting up an instructional program which treats every learner separately and individually. It is important, in fact, to remember that the social aspect of learning is why many learners are there. The fact that they're interacting with other students, learning things from each other, is extremely important. So we shouldn't get confused when we individualize and attempt to do away with group interaction, because it is a key ingredient of learning for many adults. Of course, individual projects, programmed instruction, teaching machines and other individualized techniques can be used part of the time. But, I think we can also respond to individuals in our large group instruction and help them realize that they are an important aspect of the instructional environment. For instance, providing for small group activities as part of our large group instruction allows individuals to express themselves and value their own identity through personal contributions. Small groups can be a key ingredient to individualizing instruction.

MARY: Grading contracts are another way of individualizing. A grading contract is an agreement between a student and teacher specifying the scope of a learning activity. It lists the competencies to be achieved, how they will be accomplished, and how they will be evaluated. It usually builds upon the learning objectives in the course syllabus, but permits the student to determine his or her learning activities and means of evaluation. Of course, grading contracts are not for everyone. In a business course on this campus, eight students out of a class of 95 are using them. Each of the eight students has chosen learning activities other than or in addition to the ones outlined in the course syllabus. Dr. Larry Standridge, Director of Continuing Education at Lansing Community College, is the instructor of this class.

LARRY: The grading contract permits flexibility for the student while facilitating the course objectives as outlined by the instructor. Both the content of the contracts and the reasons for negotiating them vary widely. I am now working with a 52 year old woman who chose a learning style significantly different from that anticipated in the course syllabus. She feels that concentration on vocabulary would give her fuller understanding of the course content, the textbook assignments and the lectures. By using the grading contract, she is able to concentrate on that with which she feels most comfortable. In the same class, are two high school teachers who negotiated a joint project. They will study the business and management principles used in their own school system. The superintendent has agreed to assist them with the study. They will present a co-authored paper dealing with a subject, that for them, has high interest. Another member of this class is enrolled for her first college class. She has fear about being tested. In her grading contract, she has agreed to take the tests as learning experiences, but will be evaluated primarily on other learning activities. Usually the adult learner does more than is required by the instructor. These three adults I have just described are no exception. They have chosen to go beyond the normal course requirements in order to have a meaningful learning experience.

PAUL: In this program, we have shifted the focus from "teaching adults" to "teaching diverse groups which includes adults." We suggested that we really can't be accountable to a diverse group of individuals unless we find ways to include them as an important part of the teaching-learning process. In other words, who is doing the learning needs to be as important as what is learned and how it is learned. We presented a theory of adult learning which provides us with an ideal to work toward, and we made some practical suggestions for teaching techniques that might move us closer to that ideal.

MARY: The number of 18-22 year olds attending college will decline significantly during the next 20 years. It is clear that a major function of the community college will be to educate an older population which increasingly is turning to formal schooling for help in coping with life changes. The challenges to the classroom instructor is to consider the diverse learning needs of this changing population. It is a difficult challenge, but one worth pursuing.

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